

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?



If an inventor wanted to create a company to sell his or her latest innovation, what should the inventor call it? Names are very important to small businesses. They form the image and identity that the customers see and understand. Below are four uniquely named companies commercializing technology funded by the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. A brief explanation of how each got its name is also provided.

1. ***Autonomous Technologies Corporation***, a developer of next-generation excimer laser instruments for laser vision correction. Autonomous was named after the company's first military contract, which was called the Autonomous Terminal Homing Program. "Under this program, we investigated the use of 3-D imaging laser radar [ladar] to guide cruise missiles," says Randy Frey, chief executive officer and president of Autonomous. "Later, while incorporating ladar technology to autonomous surgical systems, we realized the name still applied. So we kept it."

2. ***EMCORE Corporation***, a developer of integrated compound semiconductor solutions. Rick Stahl, one of EMCORE's founders, says the company's name had to emphasize its strategic focus in the core of electronic materials. By combining the "e" in electronic, "m" in materials, and the word "core," a new, unique company name was created.

3. ***Sagebrush Technology, Inc.***, a manufacturer of precision positioning devices. Sagebrush was given its name to help customers identify with the company's location—Albuquerque, New Mexico. "I like living in Albuquerque and I saw how much everyone enjoyed visiting here," says Don Carson, the founder of Sagebrush. "I thought by naming the company Sagebrush Technology, people would remember us more, especially when they think of images of the rugged Southwest."

4. ***Theseus Logic, Inc.***, a developer of clockless designs for microprocessors. Ken Wagner, president of Theseus, speaks of the young hero Theseus who killed the evil Procrustes, a legendary robber in Greece. "Procrustes forced travelers onto his bed where he stretched or mutilated them," says Wagner. "Today, the word 'Procrustean' means any standard to which precise conformity is forced. So we named the company Theseus because we are, in effect, slaying the proverbial procrustean microprocessor design with our clockless technology."